

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 251628Z MAR 77
FM AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0625
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
RUFJCXAMCONSUL NICE 0060
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

UNCLAS BORDEAUX 0074

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE FRENCH MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS
IN SOUTHWESTERN FRANCE

REF: REFTEL BORDEAUX NO. 064 OF MARCH 16, 1977

1. THE NATIONWIDE TREND TOWARD THE LEFT WAS CLEARLY EVIDENT IN THE SOUTHWEST BUT WITH SOME DIFFERENCES.
2. THE TWO MAJOR CITIES OF THIS CONSULAR DISTRICT, BORDEAUX AND TOULOUSE WERE HELD FOR THE MAJORITY THROUGH THE POSITION OF THE INCUMBENT MAYORS WAS SOMEWHAT ERODED. IN TOULOUSE, INCUMBENT MAYOR BAUDIS (R.I.) WHOSE SEAT WAS CONSIDERED IN JEOPARDY IN THE SECOND ROUND DID SOMEWHAT BETTER THAN EXPECTED. IN BORDEAUX, LONGTIME MAYOR CHABAN-DELMAS WON IN THE FIRST ROUND BUT HIS POSITION AND LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNAUTE URBAINE DE BORDEAUX WAS SEVERELY UNDERMINED BY THE SHARP SWING TO THE LEFT OF A NUMBER OF TOWNS IN THE VICINITY OF BORDEAUX.

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3. IN GENERAL, THE GAINS OF THE LEFT WERE MOST EVIDENT IN THE MID-SIZED AND SMALLER TOWNS. ONE PECULIARITY, PARTICULARLY IN THE SECOND ROUND, WAS THAT INCUMBENTS, EVEN WHEN THEIR LISTS WERE SUCCESSFUL, WERE OFTEN THEMSELVES WELL DOWN ON THE LISTS. THIS PREJUDICE AGAINST INCUMBENTS WAS SOMETIMES EVIDENT FOR THOSE OF THE LEFT AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE MAJORITY. IN A FEW CASES, SUCH AS LIPOWSKI IN ROYAN, THE INCUMBENT DID NOT

EVEN GAIN A PLACE ON HIS PARTY S WINNING LIST.

4. THERE WAS A TENDENCY IN THE SOUTHWEST AS ELSEWHERE FOR LISTS OF THE LEFT TO DO BETTER WHEN HEADED BY SOCIALISTS THAN WHEN HEADED BY COMMUNISTS.

5. OTHER ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS OF INTEREST IN THE SOUTHWEST WERE:

- ANGOULEME: FORMERLY KNOWN AS A CONSERVATIVE STRONGHOLD WAS SWEEP BY THE LEFT.

- ROCHEFORT: THE LEFT MADE GAINS IN THIS FORMER STRONGHOLD OF GAULLISM.

- BIARRITZ: THOUGH THE MAJORITY CANDIDATE WON, THE LEFT MADE GAINS. A SIMILAR RESULT WAS EVIDENT IN BAYONNE.

- POITIERS: WAS SWEEP BY THE LEFT.

- DEPARTMENT OF DORDOGNE: OF 19 TOWNS OF OVER 2,5000 POPULATION, 17 WENT TO THE LEFT.

- AGEN: AN EXCEPTION TO THE TREND TO THE LEFT WAS AGEN WHERE THE LEFT LOST THE MAIRIE.

6. THE POLITICIZATION OF THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS THIS YEAR SEEMS TO HAVE RESULTED IN THE ELECTORATE S TAKING A CLOSER AND MORE CRITICAL LOOK AT ITS INCUMBENT MAYORS AND CITY COUNSELLORS.
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APPARENTLY, THE ELECTORATE OFTEN FOUND THAT THE INCUMBENTS DID NOT MEASURE UP TO NEW EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS. HOWEVER, LOCAL ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES INVOLVED IN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS MAKE THEM A VERY INADEQUATE INDEX OF EXPECTATIONS FOR NEXT YEAR S LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN THIS AREA.MARVIN

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